

Xerox

Witnesses overlooked in JFK probe

By EARL GOLZ

Most witnesses who have seen accounts other than Lee Harvey Oswald in the so-called assassin's window in 1963 were either overlooked or intimidated by Warren Commission investigators.

John L. Powell, an inmate in the county jail at the time of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, recently told Dallas Morning News he saw others in his cell watched two men with a rifle to the 6th floor window of the Texas School Book Depository across the street. What he looked

the men were "fiddling with a scope on the rifle," Powell said.

Powell's sighting of the two men occurred at about the same time as a newspaper photographer Charles L. Brusca made his famous "Zapruder film," showing images in the same window.

This was about 12:34 p.m., or 10 minutes before the shooting.

POWELL AND HIS FELLOW INMATES weren't questioned by authorities, although one of Jack Ruby's witnesses later mentioned to the Warren Commission investigator that the prisoners

had a good view of what took place. It might be helpful to the commission to know that there were people in jail when we saw the street killing.

Attorney General John F. Kuhnke made the suggestion to Louis D. Weber, assistant counsel for the Warren Commission, when Kuhnke's deposition was taken three months before the commission's final report was completed in September 1964.

Remember that it did occur and merit of consideration at the time we were there," Kuhnke said. "It can wait until the investigation is over — why they didn't go up there and talk to all these prisoners," Kuhnke told The News recently.

On the day of the assassination, Powell was in his cell, a concrete and rebar cell block. While Mitchell, his cellmate, was in the shower, he described to me exactly what happened when the shots were fired, Powell said, adding, "He [Mitchell] said everybody else sick up there."

Unlike Powell, Mitchell could be "slightly off the mark" in his account of what happened, Kuhnke said. Because he is black, Mitchell probably was on the 8th floor of the then-segregated county jail, which faces Houston Street.

POWELL WAS IN A 4TH-FLOOR cage-cornered to the 4th-floor corner window of the depository where the Warren Commission placed Oswald at the time of the assassination.

"Quite a few of us new items were seen in the depository window," Powell said. "Everybody was trying to wave to the people on the street. We were waving across the street because it was directly straight across. The first thing I thought in was it was security guards. I recognized the guys."

He said he and 17 or 18 for three days on charges of vagrancy and disturbing the peace, and "maybe more than half of an estimate of inmates there were trying to look out the window."

The two men in the window across street looked darker than white people. They had kind of brownish or darker skin — like we had," Powell said.

At the shooting, started Powell taking down. And then when we heard who it was, we saw it in depository window," he said.

"I was angry then. I had very many people."

At 12:34 p.m. on the 27th

Powell said: "Most people don't believe it when you tell them about ... I never told mine about it because I didn't want to get into trouble."

Afterward, Powell told The News about a tip he received from news accounts of Dealey's killing.

KALIFMAN SAID HE asked Mitchell to connect the Warren Commission with him. "He said, 'I don't want to get into trouble.' I told him, 'It's all right.'

David B. Fischer of Memphis was peering up from the street below at about the same time Powell was watching from the jail.

He told The News recently that David W. Bell, an assistant counsel for the Warren Commission, tried to "intimidate" him into testifying. The attorney said he was to meet Bell at the jail, but he had to leave because his light-colored hair had been damaged and he had to dye it.

"He [Bell] and I had a fight situation at the interview room over whether I would testify or not," Fischer said. "He wanted me to tell him that the man was dark headed and I wouldn't do it."

Oswald's hair "doesn't appear to me to be dark," Fischer said. "I know that I am," Fischer said, "and that's what Bell was about when I saw him. But I didn't see it at the time."

Fischer said he was afraid to be an "easy person" in the audience but it was extremely possible from an point of view that he couldn't have seen another person.

The new man was wearing "some

kind of a light-colored shirt like maybe a 'T-shirt,' and I could see through the open part of the window into the room. He had a gun in his pocket and he had the top of his head up — just the top of his head."

Fischer and the man "seemed to be on the simple taxpayer" at the time he was testifying. Fischer was in the window, the man was looking the other way for the interview.

Across the street from Fischer and Edwards, at the northwest corner of Elm and Houston, near the base of the depository, Mrs. Carolyn Winkler, who was the new woman, was on the sidewalk.

"One of them had dark hair — a darker complexion than the other," Mrs. Winkler said. "I didn't receive the appearance of the other man except from the contact of his head and shoulders, but not like they were leaning out."

She said she saw no gun, but "they weren't close enough to the window to be able to know if they were holding anything."

Across a few feet from Mrs. Winkler was Mrs. Carolyn Winkler, a fellow worker at a dress shop across the street from the book depository across the street from the book depository.

Mr. Winkler, 40, was at the same time and also saw two men in an upper-story window of the depository. One was holding a gun, she said. The gun man was wearing a dark brown suit and the other man had on a light-colored shirt or jacket she said.

"I was shocked to see that when we were home," Mrs. Winkler said.

"They were going to get out to prove a point and I had an instance of arguing with them and was 'karma,'" she said. "I felt like I had told them all I knew."

Another witness, Arnold Howard, said he saw a man in a 6th-floor window of the depository holding a rifle across his chest at 12:30 p.m. or about 10 minutes before the sighting by the women and the shooting of President's film. From his position along Houston Street, he had a good view of the depository. Howard said he saw a second man, a black, in another window on the 8th floor — the floor above where Oswald was supposed to have shot the president.

ROWLAND STUCK to his story during a lengthy grilling by Warren Commission lawyers, even though he had no memory of the event. Mrs. Winkler, however, insisted from Rowland's wife that "at times my husband is prone to exaggerate" after he asked her whether "you can rely on everything that your husband says."

Rowland's story is also important because he saw the gunman in the 8th-floor window at 12:35 p.m., or minutes before a book depository employee said she saw Oswald in the 6th-floor window.

Mrs. Carolyn Johnson, wife of Memphis, told The News she saw a man who resembled Oswald about an hour or two before he was seen in the second floor as she was on her way out of the depository at about 12:30 p.m. to watch the motorcade. Five minutes

later the shots rang out.

Mrs. Johnson and the major had just

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By EARL GOLZ

Most witnesses who may have seen someone other than Lee Harvey or Jack Ruby shoot and kill the president's killer were overlooked or dismissed by Warren Commission investigators.

Johnny L. Powell, an inmate in the state penitentiary at the time of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, recently told The Dallas Morning News and others in his cell watched two men leave the Texas School Book Depository across the street. When he looked

the men were "looking with" a rifle, Powell said.

Powell's sighting of the two

occurred at about the same time

as the killing of Lee Harvey

and was claimed by the

Warren Commission as

the killing of the president.

POWELL AND his fellow

inmates questioned by

the commission were

never interviewed by a Warren

investigator that the

men were "looking with" a

rifle, Powell said.

Powell's sighting of the two

men was the second

time he had seen them.

He was in the

penitentiary representing a county

and inmate, William H. Chesser, was

described to the commission as

having "the same kind of

personality as Powell," revealing

that he was a "good

and reliable" inmate.

"We had a lot of new things from

men in the depository," Powell

said. "Everybody was trying to

water down and all that. We were

looking around a street between

the pens and the pens were

directly across from the depository.

When the shooting started Powell

was looking down. And then we kind

of looked up and it's depository

Window was empty.

"I didn't see very many people."

The two men in the window across

the street "looked darker" than white

and were wearing "kind of brownish

deckin' or slate-green — like work

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"I didn't see very many people."

"One of them had dark hair — a darker complexion

than the other," Powell said. "I don't

recall the appearance of the other man except for

you could see their head and shoulders, but not

like they were leaning out."

He did not say, but they weren't close

enough in the window to be able to know if they were

holding anything."

Standing a few feet from Mrs. Headlands

home was a fellow worker at a dress factory

across the street — the book depository.

Mrs. Wathier looked across the street and

saw two men in an upper-floor window of the

depository. One was holding a gun, she said. The gun

man was wearing a dark brown suit and the other

man had on a light-colored suit or jacket she said.

Later the FBI "tried to make out that what I

saw were fakes," Mrs. Wathier said.

"They were going to set out to prove me a liar and I

had no intention of arguing with them and being

harassed," she said. "It's not like I had told them all I

know."

Another witness, Arnold Rowland, said he saw a

man in a fifth-floor window of the depository building

at 12:15 p.m., or about 10 minutes

before the killing, he was depository employee and the

new Oswald in the 20th floor room.

Mrs. Carolyn Johnson of Mesquite, Texas, told

The News recently that she was down on the second

floor as she was on her way out of the depository at

about 12:30 p.m. to watch the motorcade. Five minutes

earlier, she said, the man had

reports of the shooting with her, but she was

surprised to hear they still had no information

regarding Oswald in the basement.

Mrs. Johnson, and the man had

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personality as Powell," revealing

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time as the actual killing

in the same building.

Arnold Rowland of Mesquite made

the statement to James D. Hargan,

assistant counsel for the Warren

Commission, when he was

taken into custody three months before

the president's assassination.

"I remember that that did not

start out as a time to

find out all these things. Why they didn't go up

there and talk to me I don't know."

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